THE

# RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Vol. III. February 11, 1938 Adar I, 10, 5698 No. 20.

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**THE RUBAIYAT OF YEHUDA HALEVI**

*By Abraham M. Klein*

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**INDEX TO VOLUME III**

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THE
# RECONSTRUCTIONIST

Vol. III. February 11, 1938 Adar I, 10, 5698 No. 20.

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## EDITORIALS

### The Society of Friends of Hebrew

AT the recent annual conference of the Histadrut Ivrit held in Baltimore, it was decided to organize a Society of Friends of Hebrew, to include not only those who speak Hebrew fluently, but also those who, though not completely at home in the language, are, nevertheless, real friends of Hebrew culture. Hitherto, the Histadrut Ivrit has been almost an esoteric fellowship which, because of its very nature, was open only to those who could speak and read Hebrew fairly well. As a result, its membership has been limited in numbers, and its activities have been circumscribed. Yet, the work it has been doing is second to none in its importance for the future of Jewish life in this country. It has carried almost alone the burden of fostering Hebrew culture in America. Year after year it has made possible the publication of the only Hebrew weekly in America, *Hadoar;* it has made available to the public the writings of American Hebrew poets and novelists; and through its lectures, concerts and celebrations it has provided practically the only public forum for Hebrew and Hebrew letters. The pity is that, despite the significance of the work the Histadrut is doing, it has great difficulty in meeting even its very modest budget.

The organization of the Society of Friends of Hebrew should enable the Histadrut to reach out to all those who have the welfare of Hebrew and Hebrew culture at heart, to enlarge the circle of its friends and benefactors, and enable it to carry on more effectively the work it is doing. Needless to say, we hope that all our readers will enroll as Friends of the Society.

We are all subject to periods of depression when we feel pessimistic about the future of Hebrew in this country. We think of the great yearly overturn of pupils in the Hebrew schools. We know that only about one out of every hundred pupils who enter the Hebrew schools, ever graduates from a higher institution of Jewish learning; in other words, only one per cent ever get to the point of speaking, reading and writing Hebrew tolerably well. And when we remember that the great masses of children never reach the Hebrew school, our pessimism regarding the future of Hebrew in this country seems quite justified.

And yet there are signs of an awakening interest in Hebrew and Hebrew culture, which should give us renewed hope

and which should make us more sanguine about the future. The introduction of Hebrew into the public high schools of New York City has made it possible for thousands of Jewish adolescents to study the Hebrew language and literature five times a week for three years, on a par with French, German and other modern languages. Many thousands more are expected to avail themselves of the opportunity for such study in the next few years. Brooklyn College and New York University have opened courses in Hebrew, to enable students who have studied it in the high school to continue their studies further. The other local colleges are expected to follow this example. Similar situations exist in cities outside of New York. It ought to be possible to make the study of Hebrew in the high schools, colleges and universities in other parts of the country even more widespread than at present.

The growth and the number of women's institutes of Jewish studies is another hopeful sign. That so many women, young and old, are willing to go to school twice a week to master the Hebrew language is encouraging indeed. The homes of such women will become real Jewish homes, offering a healthy environment for the learning, appreciation and growth of Hebrew culture. A third hopeful sign is the expansion in the work of the newly organized Histadrut Hanoar Haivri which has gathered under its banner all the young Hebraists in the country. This federation of youth is publishing its own Hebrew journal and developing its own Hebrew theatre, chorus and forums.

Hebrew can have a future in this country, and a bright one, if all its friends cooperate. Many of us give our aid willingly to the Hebrew University and to the cause of Hebrew in Palestine, but do little or nothing about promoting Hebrew and its culture in this country. We must remember, even at the cost of repetition, that Zionism implies the rebirth of the Hebrew spirit, its language and literature, in the diaspora as well as in Palestine. Let us hope that the new Society of Friends of Hebrew will be able to do effectively the many tasks with which it is faced: the introduction of Hebrew into more public high schools and colleges; getting proper support for the Hebrew Youth Movement; the publication of a Hebrew Quarterly or Monthly; the publication of a simple illustrated Hebrew magazine for adults whose knowledge of Hebrew is limited; making the Hebrew classics available in cheap editions for a larger reading public; the establishment of prizes and fellowships to give deserving scholars and writers leisure to pursue their work; the maintenance of a Hebrew theatre. These and many others are projects which the Society should and must undertake.

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## What Is Our Foreign Policy?

THE Congress of the United States was called upon during the past fortnight by President Roosevelt to appropriate for naval expansion the largest sum of money allotted for such purposes since 1920-1921. According to all indications, the President will ask for even more before long. At a time when numerous internal projects, like that of aid for the unemployed, cry for support, the taxpayers of the country are asked to subsidize a gigantic program of rearmament. They are certainly entitled to know what the President intends to do with these new battleships and other instruments of war.

Up to the present writing, no clarification of this question has been forthcoming. To all intents and purposes, the government is proceeding without an avowed foreign policy, and lovers of peace are clamoring to know whether our leaders are leading us toward military intervention, economic sanctions, neutrality, isolation or pure opportunism. To be sure, the reasons given for the new Naval Appropriation Bill refer to the "tension"

prevailing throughout the world, and to the wars that are now being waged by one-fourth the world's population. But where we come in, the President has not said.

If we analyze some of the realities involved in this new drive for a bigger navy (and army), we have good reason to be seriously disturbed. First, if the President acknowledges the fact that one-fourth the world is at war, he implies that Japan and China are actually at war; otherwise, the number of people engaged in hostilities do not amount to that figure. If, then, China and Japan are at war, why does the President not put the neutrality legislation into effect? In the case of Spain, neutrality has been pursued by the United States. Does the distinction lie in the difference between our interests in Japan and those in Spain?

This seems to be the case, for other realities point in that direction. The United States and Great Britain are obviously cooperating in the Far East to check Japanese aggression. Our fleet "maneuvers" in the Pacific, and a number of our ships will "attend" the opening of the new Singapore fortifications. Our Department of State has taken a firm stand on the Panay incident.

Unless our government openly states its program, many Americans will be driven to the following conclusions, on the basis of our actions thus far: The Government is preparing for a war on foreign soil to protect American and British imperial interests; at the same time, the Government has not the courage to run counter to the interests of the business magnates who are growing rich on the sale of munitions and other necessities of war. In other words, our industrialists are to make as much money as they can out of the Sino-Japanese war, and later on, when we have become deeply involved, our young men will be asked to shed their blood to insure Britain's and our right to do business with China.

Perhaps the President does not have this program in mind; but we have no way of knowing otherwise. Until our foreign policy is clearly stated, all thinking Americans will have no choice but to believe the worst.

## Jewish Centers and Civic Problems

THE editors of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST have been greatly encouraged by the response from readers to its articles and editorials. The correspondence that we have published from time to time shows that what we write provokes our readers to thought. We are particularly happy to note to what extent our correspondents have identified themselves with the fundamental principles of Reconstructionism. This is true even when their letters criticize adversely our position on specific questions. Such criticism is at all times welcome.

The two letters that have appeared in this issue and in our last preceding one, in criticism of our editorial in the issue of January 14, "Defend Demomcracy with Other Americans," have made us realize that our statement in that editorial is open to grave misconstruction. The fault is ours, and we thank our correspondents for calling our attention to it, and giving us the opportunity for clarifying our stand.

We stated in that article that we thought it ill-advised for the Jewish Center of Jersey City to have scheduled Roger Baldwin to address its forum on the controversy of Mayor Hague with the C.I.O., and argued that such an address should have been given under more general auspices. We did not then anticipate that our readers might draw certain inferences from our statements, which apparently they did draw from them. We did not mean to suggest, for example, that general civic problems had no place in the Jewish Center, nor that it would have been inappropriate to have made the facilities of the Center available for a civic protest against the arbitrary con-

duct of Jersey City's Mayor. On the contrary, it is a fundamental principle of Reconstructionism that the Jewish community must concern itself with the whole life of the Jew, and must therefore mediate his adjustment to the larger social community in which he lives and of which he, no less than the Gentile, is a responsible member.

In an educational forum arranged under Center auspices, in which no immediate practical objective is to be achieved, there can be no valid objection to an address on civil liberties, or any other subject of general interest to the American citizen. But where, as was the case in Jersey City, a specific local situation calls for remedial action in which all liberal elements within the community are equally interested, we feel that joint action is both more effective and more appropriate. In such a situation we should not permit either institutional pride or a feeling of Jewish isolationism to influence us to act independently.

The Jewish Center of Jersey City might appropriately have invited the participation of other groups, and it could with equal appropriateness have offered the use of its auditorium if no better could have been found. But we still maintain that in civic affairs, Jewish organizations should adhere to the policy of cooperation with other liberal elements rather than one of aloofness on the one hand, or self-assertive activity on the other.

# Art and Jewish Life

*By* Ira Eisenstein

I

ART has been described as the extraction of those significant aspects of experience which are given articulation by the most sensitive souls in a group. Like all expression, art is selective. It eliminates from its scope all those elements of experience which are not pregnant with meaning, which do not convey some intelligible message, which by their very nature contribute nothing to the elucidation of human values. Art is a response to human needs, and as such it applies its skill to the task of lifting from the blooming, buzzing chaos of experience those phenomena which by their isolation and their organization by the artist, illumine the whole and give it harmony.

This definition of art may lead one to imagine that the experience referred to is the experience of human life as a whole, and that therefore art partakes of that universal character which transcends the boundaries of any one civilization. But if we examine how art has been created in the past, we realize that those universal aspects of human experience which have been made the material of artistic expression have always been the aspects of the experience of a particular civilization. All creations of the human mind share this character. The form, the content and the purpose of the great literary, musical and artistic masterpieces of the world have reflected the personalities of individual societies from which their creators sprang. Dostoevski is unmistakably Russian; Bach is unquestionably German; and no one could possibly fail to recognize the distinctive origins of a Japanese print.

The unit of distinctiveness is invariably the national unit. It is the nation that produces cultural values. Human life is so constituted that certain units of creativity are fixed. The human being himself is created by the unit of a pair of human beings, of opposite sexes. Neither the city, the province, the state, nor a confederation of states can produce a child. Natural creativity is determined by an unchangeable law of nature. Similarly it is only the family that can evoke the distinctive

phenomenon of parental love. The family unit is indispensable if this particular phenomenon is sought.

Cultural values, on the other hand, have never been created except by that unit which we call the "nation." It is important to distinguish between the nation and the state. The state is the administrative unit; the nation is the cultural unit, deriving its character from the possession of a language, a history, a land, and the sense, among its people, of a common future and mutual responsibility. On the basis of this distinction we can understand why Dante was a product of Italian civilization before Italy was consolidated into a unified state; and why the Bible remained Jewish even after the Jews lost their status as a political entity. The USSR is now the political form of that nation which is known as Russian; but Chekhov, who wrote his plays and tales before the revolution, remains distinctively Russian. Germany was not a state when Bach composed his music; but the character of that music remains unchanged.

Undoubtedly the vicissitudes of a nation may influence and color the cultural creations of its people. The subjects of its poems, statues and symphonies, and their form patterns, may go into desuetude; new subjects and forms may be evolved. But it is not the state *per se* that determines the essential quality of cultural achievements. The nation is the only unit capable of evolving the creative talents and of moulding their works. Even two such critics as Von Schlegel and Taine, who held antagonistic views of political theory, agreed on the fundamental thesis that art is and should be the function of the nation rather than the state. "There is much talk," said Von Schlegel, "of one universal beauty and art; but it is idle; up to the present there has not been a single example of a non-national work of art." Taine insisted that art is essentially national, and he maintained that only those artists who portrayed the essential features of their nations gained immortality. He contends that Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" (he includes literature in the general category of Art) alone of that author's two hundred volumes stands out because the typical Englishman is there described; and Cervantes' Don Quixote attained everlasting fame because "it embodied the national character of the Spaniard, chivalrous, morbid, proud, such as eight centuries of crusades and overcharged reveries have made him." (The views of Von Schlegel and Taine are quoted in *The Evolution of Modern Nationalism*, by C. J. R. Hayes, p. 184).

The quality of national distinctiveness, however, does not preclude the possibility of universal appeal and significance. If that were so, there would be no intercommunication of culture, and we should be aware only of the culture of the nation to which we happen to belong. Obviously there is another aspect to national culture which helps it to transcend the limits of its origins. That aspect is the human or universal. Great books, great music and great art may be recognized as such when they are endowed with this universal quality. The works we have referred to above are deemed works of genius because they reflect deep human emotions or move in a universe of discourse which is profoundly human, despite their superficially limited form or language.

Thus when we speak of art as the extraction of significant elements in experience, we refer definitely to national art and to national experience, but not necessarily to art which has meaning only to those who have shared that experience themselves or to whom that experience is part of their heritage. We mean art which at its best selects those elements in experience which have their analogues in parallel civilizations and which, though differing in space, time, intensity or effect, possess those touches of nature which make the whole world kin.

When a civilization is functioning, art is produced; and, conversely, when art is produced we may be sure that a civilization is alive. The creation of art can be utilized as a criterion of normal group

life by reason of the very definition of art that we have submitted, because such art would imply that the group has had experiences variegated enough to provide the sensitive soul with some that are significant. Men, places, events have filled the consciousness of the artist and have supplied the elements out of which art is born. Even when a civilization is decadent it continues to inspire its artists; the Hellenic culture was prolific of art in the days of its rapid decline.

But when a civilization has lost all its virility, and its people no longer consciously revere it, the artist either ceases to function altogether or else seeks other civilizations from which to draw his inspiration. He may indeed continue to function formally as a member of the defunct life, but the roots of his art are elsewhere.

II

If the above considerations bear the scrutiny of logic and experience, Jews who take Jewish life seriously have reason to be concerned about the future of Jewish civilization, for during the past generation and a half the gifted members of the Jewish people have not turned to the experience of the Jewish people for the substance of their creations. The Jews have indeed been endowed with a generous endowment of artistic talent, but they have not created Jewish art. The artists themselves are certainly not to blame, except in those cases where conscious effort has been exerted by artists to dissociate themselves from an experiential heritage which they despised. On the whole, the failure of gifted Jews to create Jewish art has been an index of the disintegration of Jewish life, the fading of the Jewish experience from the consciousness of Jews. When Jewish life was vigorous, its social organization intact, its sense of continuity with the past unmitigated, Jews constantly utilized the totality of their national experience to articulate, through the medium of their distinctive expression, those universal values which art, anywhere at its best, revealed.

The dramatic elements of Jewish observance—its symbols, rites and commemorations—constituted "significant form" for they functioned as art functions, denoting "a selection, for the sake of emphasis, purity and subtlety, of those forms which give consummatory significance to every-day subject-matters of experience." (Dewey, *Experience and Nature,* p. 372). The oppression from which Jews suffered in Egypt and the redemption they experienced constituted the elements of the medieval Jews' experience which they extracted from their long history and which they utilized "to give consummatory significance" to their ghetto miseries. Through the Pesah festival and the Seder they derived that courage and endurance which made it possible for them to continue to find their Jewishness worthwhile. The episode of Esther and Mordecai, selected from the mass of Jewish experiences in the diaspora, became in the festival of Purim the means whereby the medieval Jews sought the values of faith and hope in their own black despair.

With the Emancipation, Jewish social organization was dissolved, the sense of continuity with the past broken, and the "every-day subject-matters of experience" were radically transformed. Jews no longer intuitively identified their world with that complex of memories, associations, institutions, events and personalities, books, and ideas which constituted the world of the Jewish people. They sought to effect the necessary psychological adjustment to their new environment by adopting in one fell swoop of retroactive union the entire body of an alien past. In so doing they transferred their art into a new medium. In transit their art was revolutionized. It became subjective, personal, and, in the opinion of some, uncreative. (Cp. Saminsky, *Music of Ghetto and Bible*). No longer eager to articulate the hopes, fears, insights of their own people, they failed utterly to graft themselves to the tradition of other peoples. What remained for them was merely to "mimic, not really create," as Schumann and Wagner believed.

"All true art is praise," said Ruskin.

We may add: when art is lacking, no greater indictment can be imagined. The secession of Jewish artists from Jewish life reveals more than the mistaken notions of the artist; it betokens the failure of Jewish thinkers and leaders so to conceive of Judaism as to make it relevant to the urges of the artists. The artist had to choose between richness of content with supernaturalism, and sterility with rationalism.

With the Zionist movement Jewish art took on a new life. The germinal idea of the land rebuilt, the exiles returned, a modern life developing continuous with the past, yet new, yielded creativity in all the arts: plastic, musical, literary, terpsichorean, dramatic. The infinite elements of the Jewish consciousness were reshuffled, rearranged, reconstructed, and in their new relationships became provocative, suggestive, thrilling. Now once again the data of the Jewish past regained meaning, "consummatory significance." The universal yearning for freedom, work, construction, creation, is reunited with the material of a civilization, and art inevitably emerges. In Palestine the Jewish people *lives.*

## III

Jewish art can make its habitation only in Palestine, for it is only there that its distinctive quality can be unpremeditated. The landscape, the situation, the occasion, everything but the sheer technique will be indigenous. Whoever paints a picture in Palestine will be creating Jewish art, no matter what the subject be. Is there, however, any possibility of Jewish art in the diaspora? There is, but that art can be of only a very special kind, namely religious art; in other words, that art which utilizes the data of the Jewish past as symbolic of universal ideals, with reference to immediate situations or events. Such art may be produced by Jew and non-Jew alike. It would, however, be unrealistic to aspire for the kind of Jewish art which would reflect the scenes of a daily life distinctively Jewish. Only a revived ghetto could yield that kind of representation, literary or plastic; and the ghetto is no desideratum. The reactionism responsible for such a reversion to medieval segregation would be far more reprehensible than the art it might produce would be welcome.

Jewish religious art would utilize the *sancta* of Jewish life, past and present, for the purpose of affirming an idea relevant equally to Jew and Gentile. Its subject matter would not have the intrinsic interest which less significant subject matter might have for Palestinians. Thus, for example, a play dealing with life in Tel Aviv, or a painting of a familiar sight in the Emek would elicit from a Palestinian at once that recognition which yields an indescribable satisfaction. Such a play or scene for the American Jew would arouse some vague response of kinship. But American Jewish life has not even those familiar sights.

The American Jewish artist must therefore draw upon the sights and sounds of Jewish life, past and present, here and in Palestine, which bear upon the larger life of Man. And whatever interpretation the artist gives constitutes in a deep sense the expression of his religion or world outlook. We should not, however, permit ourselves to make light of such achievements. For aught we know, they may come to be valued far above the transient work of inferior artists who work indigenously on their own native soil.

In the realm of music and of literature, religion gives the *galut* artist his most expansive field. If the synagogue could at last be emancipated from the tight shackles of an unyielding tradition, not for assimilationist purposes but for renewed creative possibilities, it could constitute a rich inspiration for artistic endeavor. New prayer and new religious music, stemming from the old, yet infused with the spark of the new world, yearn to be written.

Who are the artists of tomorrow who will see these potentialities for the creative imagination?

# THE RUBAIYAT OF YEHUDA HALEVI

By ABRAHAM M. KLEIN

I.

From him whom Love's sweet anguish now desrtoys,
Wherefore withold the heralds of thy choice,
O lovely one? Dost thou not know that he
Desires but the greeting of thy voice?

II.

Since parting, parting now divides our days
Stay yet a while; let me regard thy face;
I know not if my heart remains with me,
Or with thee wanders forth upon thy ways.

III.

O may my dreams into thy dreams take flight!
I charge thee, by the life of love, keep bright,
As I have kept, the nights of our desire,
The memory of the days of our delight.

IV.

A sea of tears between us, O dear heart!
I seek to cross; I fail. Do thou but start
Towards it, and I swear the waters would
Before the falling of thy footstep, part.

V.

Surely I shall, even from the grave's distress,
Inquire of my darling's happiness.
O grant it me that in that tomb I hear
The tingling of the bells upon her dress!

VI.

Wherefore deniest thou my blood is shed?
Thy hands have shed my heart's blood; I have bled.
And this my word two witnesses confirm;
Thy cheeks of scarlet, and thy lips of red.

VII.

A smile upon thy lips; the ruby glows
Over the row of pearls! The sun's light grows
Upon thy face, but when thy raven hair
Thereon is spread, night comes, and daylight goes!

VIII.

Some do adorn themselves with charms, man-made;
But thou in glory and splendor art arrayed;
Beauty and grace the raiment of thine eyes,
Than silk which clothes thee finer, than brocade.

IX.

Between the honey of thy kisses, and
The gall of parting, it doth take its stand,
My heart which thou hast made into thin plate,
And torn to shreds, and cut in many a strand!

X.

My spikenard and my myrrh upon thy breast
My honey on thy lips, I do request
From fate but these two gifts: the scarlet thread
Upon thy lips, the girdle of thy waist.

XI.

Thy voice I cannot hear, but hear I do
Upon my heart thy footsteps passing thru—
O from these footsteps may I gather up
The blossoms so bespent with my heart's dew!

XII.

Daughters and sons wish fredom's sweet release
To be thy slaves, thy handmaidens; and these,
These much desire to be thy kith and kin:
The Sun and Moon, the Plough, the Pleiades!

# Correspondence

## More On the Prayer Book

SIRS:

A review of Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book by Morris Silverman in your issue of January 14 begins by praising faintly "a serious and earnest attempt to introduce a unifying force in Conservative Congregations" and concludes by damning completely a prayer book that offers no new approach and that reeks with defeatism.

It is my sincere belief that a closer examination of the contents and a better realization of the purpose of this prayer book would have elicited a much more favorable criticism. Before entering into a discussion of the main objection of the reviewer—that we are presented with nothing new—let us examine the lesser evils that supposedly abound in the text.

Why the seemingly arbitrary exclusion of certain passages and the equally arbitrary inclusion of others? The reviewer certainly did not fail to note that wherever it was feasible the compiler avoided reference to a future temple sacrificial service by changing the נעשה ונקריב to עשינו והקרבנו, by completely rewriting the יהי רצון after the Amidah, etc. Surely this explains the omission of the פטום הקטרת. The במה מדליקין not only falls into this category but has the precedent of never having been included in the Orthodox prayer book סִפּוּר used by almost 75 per cent of Orthodox Jewry. The principles of R. Ishmael are still a guide if only to the Rabbi in his study of the Talmud and both texts of יקום פרקן are still meaningful enough to have avoided exclusion.

Why the spirit of defeatism implicit in transliterated texts? Will the reviewer call the Aramaic of the Talmud, the Arabic of Maimonides, the English of the *Reconstructionist,* the English translations of the text in most of our prayer books, the English sermons of our Rabbis defeatism? Or are they all attempts to cope with problems presented at different times? Is it greater defeatism to transliterate holy letters than to translate holy words? We all recognize the fact that certain worshipers especially among the women cannot read the Hebrew text. Is it not permissable to make it easier for them to join the Congregational singing by transliterating certain passages?

But there still remains a great objection of a lack of a new approach. It is not difficult to become enthusiastic about something which is completely new—which has broken entirely with the past. It is also comparatively simple to cheer those who go down fighting to preserve intact the teachings of the past. It is not so easy, however, to recognize the significance of a single step forward; to praise and urge onward one who has allowed neither extreme to captivate him. And yet, I dare say, most of that which we call progress has come about through the efforts of liberals who have slowly "tampered with" and improved without completely transforming the heritage of the past. And as we await the day when all prayers will be the perfect expression of the masses of men we can still recognize the benefits of a fine collection of responsive readings and special selections of an eclectic nature for private and public meditation." True, we have as yet no Utopian prayer book—the Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book is, however, unquestionably the best at hand.

RABBI W. P. GREENFELD.

Waterbury, Conn.

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## More On Defending Democracy

SIRS:

In your editorial on the Baldwin-Hague-Jewish Center situation in your issue of January 14, 1938, you refer to the fact that "the Mayor has abrogated all civil liberties," and state that any support to the cause of Mr. Hague is a betrayal of Jewish tradition and Jewish interests. You employ the epithet "fascist" in describing Hague's conduct. Then you say that there is no reason why Mr. Baldwin should be scheduled to speak for a specifically Jewish audience! Because, perhaps, Jews will be exposed to criticism? Or that reactionaries will cry "communists"? Perchance because Baldwin is "leftist"? Because a speech on civil liberties would not be specifically religious or strictly Jewish? Is there no room for social justice or for anti-fascist appeals in a Jewish forum? Is there no relationship possible between Judaism and social progress?

A way must be found to synthesize the various efforts at conserving and developing Jewish life with an effort to achieve a more equitable social order. Jews must be made to see, in the first place, that instead of ignoring or repudiating their Jewish heritage for the sake of engaging in the struggle for a better world, they should, on the contrary, utilize that heritage to the utmost as an additional motivating force.

The policy of inconspicuousness would, if followed to its last logical consequences, imply a full renunciation of all forms of desirable activity. It would leave the Jew with nothing. There is little which can be said for the strategy of avoiding attack through self-concealment. Jews must resist to the full the powers of economic and political reaction, the chauvinism and fascism which threaten the western world. As human beings and as Americans they ought to throw their lot in with those groups which struggle for a fuller life for all. This obligation devolves morally on all men alike. For Jews it is a practical and inescapable necessity.

Sad to relate, many labor leaders continue to distrust the manifestations of interest on the part of Jewish religious groups in social problems, although, officially, Judaism has become greatly concerned with economic movements.

Within the past year or two the Central Conference of American Rabbis has gone even further, practically advocating the abolition of the profit system through some orderly democratic process.

Now, it will undoubtedly be said that for Jews to preach socialism is to stir up anti-Semitism. This contention is based upon a superficial understanding of the cause of anti-Semitism. As long as we are going to be accused, let us be accused legitimately of something which makes for equality, justice and the possibility of Jewish survival.

It is not sufficient merely to indicate to American Jews that fascism carries with it inevitably the shame and degradation of their people. It is equally necessary to warn them that fascism is a real menace to America. The sympotoms of the fascist movement can be seen by those who have eyes to see them. Unemployment is rising here, wages are being lowered, civil liberties are being flagrantly violated.

Advanced religious thinkers agree that religious people must unite with the revolutionary forces, if religion is to survive.

Surely you have recognized by now that each one of the above "arguments" against your editorial position has been lifted almost bodily from articles by Messrs. Kaplan, Steinberg, Israel, Eisenstein and Nabee appearing in the Jewish Reconstructionist Papers. It is not a case of returning the invention; it is merely that I am confused as to your true position on militant social attitudes of Jews.

Insofar as concerns Baldwin not being a strictly Jewish "article," we may note that the Reconstructionist Papers, in promoting Judaism as a civilization, has articles on birth control, social insurance, minimum wages for women, child labor and the League of Nations. And in recent numbers of *The Reconstructionist* there appear articles entitled as follows: *The Middle Class Mind and Fascism, A Disservice to American Democracy* (wherein you say that Hague's conduct is an illustration of fascism in action), *Eradicate Lynching* (what will the South think of us!), and *Social and Economic Conditions Today.*

Perhaps I am not quick to perceive the niceties of words or phrase distinctions but we are either for fascism in action or against it. If we are against it, then the only understandable possible excuse for cancelling a Baldwin lecture would be, as I see it, a direct and immediate risk of great physical or material harm to those involved.

MENDON MORRILL.

Paterson, N. J.

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